

E.A., Jr. and Marguerite Caum House
104 Coleridge Avenue
Llyswen Neighborhood
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5874

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

E. A., JR., AND MARGUERITE CAUM HOUSE

HABS No. PA-5874

Location: 104 Coleridge Avenue

Date of Erection: ca. 1911-14

Description: The side-gambrel roof form is uncommon in Llyswen. At 109 Browning Ave. (Fig. 6.10) it represents a well-considered design choice, adding volume and picturesque character to a compact cottage. In this larger house on a sloping lot, however, the mass and volume of the same type of roof presents an aesthetic problem: how to avoid, at this greater scale, an unfortunate resemblance to a barn. The solution of this home's designer was to accentuate the horizontal by borrowing the vocabulary of the Craftsman bungalow. The resultant clash of proportions is vaguely disconcerting. A shingle-faced shed dormer with paired windows attempts but fails to normalize the expansive roof. It does, however, project forward enough to counteract the effect of the raised foundation, which makes the house appear to "fall away" from the sidewalk viewer. Meanwhile, the low porch roof combines with a long band of porch rail and foundation shrubbery to visually shorten the house's street facade, creating a "cozier" scale. But the bungalow overlay begins to crumble at the front stairs and thoroughly breaks down at the front wall of the house. The corresponding everyday proportions of the flagstone walk and the unelaborated entry point up the overblown scale of not only the porch stairs but the porch as a whole. To realize that the front door and picture window are of quite standard size is also to recognize that this "bungalow" is actually a very large house, in whose obscured front facade that "picture" window is all but lost.

History: This house was built sometime between 1911 and 1914. Contractor Patrick W. Finn bought the lot as an investment property from Harry Bott of 100 Coleridge Ave. in 1904. At Finn's bankruptcy sale in 1910, Edward J. Lomnitz, treasurer of Mountain City Trust Company and a small-scale independent speculator, acquired this lot along with several other Finn properties in Llyswen, including three lots and four houses. One month later he sold it for \$800 to Percy and Harriet Rich, who acquired the house at 100 Coleridge Ave. from the Botts in 1905. Rich was something of a speculator himself. The next year, he sold this lot for \$1,500 to E. A. Caum, Jr., an engineer who also managed the Caum & Son Ice Cream Company. The 1912-13 city directory shows E. A. and Marguerite Caum residing at 104 Coleridge Ave., but the house doesn't appear on tax rolls until 1914, when the property value was assessed at \$1,600. In 1931 Caum sold it to Fred Pearce, advertising manager of the Altoona Mirror. The house was home to the Pearce family for thirty-three years. The present owners acquired it in 1973.

Sources: Maps: 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 149/273, 151/556, 196/54, 197/374, 202/636, 320/304, 320/306, 400/563, 826/709, 946/727.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. An overview of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and an overview of Llyswen (HABS No. PA-5787) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by Kathy Edwards in the summer of 1989 under the supervision of Alison K. Hoagland, HABS historian, and Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian. Edwards's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.